

blooming in a fence corner in December last during a period of warm sunny days and occasional sharp, frosty nights.

The head is normal as to the involucre, the white rays and a zone of a certain width of disk flowers. Then however comes a zone of ray flowers again, standing more or less upright and looking outwards; and surmounting the rounded summit of the receptacle is a tuft of the brown bordered scales quite similar except as to size to those of the involucre. There is no extension of the normal axis and no tendency to a repetition of the flowering or vegetating shoot; hence it is not an example of the not uncommon *proliferation* unless we should call it a case of inverted proliferation which would not be accounting for its existence.

The explanation which I would offer is based upon a hint obtained from Sachs's Plant Physiology where he describes an abnormal sun-flower in illustrating the principles of acropetal succession in growth. I should say that an injury, possibly cold, arrested growth at the developing apex of the receptacle when this latter was still quite young so that it ceased to be the growing point. Just below and round about this region renewed proliferation of embryonic tissue began and proceeded backwards towards the older parts, forming a new growing zone to which the arrested original growing point now stood in the same relation as the older parts in the ordinary receptacle stand to the normal growing apex or centrum. In further development the disposition of the members of the inflorescence would now be in the true but inverted progressive sequence from the older to the newer parts of the axis; that is, the abnormally placed involucreal scales about the center, followed by the ring of ray flowers and these succeeded by the disk flowers which merge into those of the unaltered parts of the receptacle.—B. W. BARTON, *Baltimore, Md.*

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## EDITORIAL.

IT REALLY SEEMS that the flood gates have been opened in the matter of priority in nomenclature and that we are to be deluged with ancient names for well-known plants. That too great conservatism may have withheld the authors of our floras from making needful changes may be conceded to those who are radical reformers, since it is of no importance for our present purpose. But the search after new-old names is leading those who are making changes into some ludicrous and even ridiculous blunders. It is not our intention to

single out examples of these from the numerous ones in recent publications. Rather it is our endeavor to stay the tide of folly.

MANY BOTANISTS who appreciate their limitations in the matter of describing new species, ignore or underrate their limitations in the matter of nomenclature. It is vastly easier as a rule to determine and describe a new species than to settle on the oldest proper name of a plant. In the latter, experience is of even greater value than in the former. Those who think it a mere matter of searching through books will find in their undoing that it is much more.

Is IT not also curious, from a psychological point of view, that one who is compiling a local flora or writing an article on local plants, should decline to use the names applied to the plants in the flora of the country — names which it is quite certain designate unmistakably what plant is meant — and should go searching after other names which *may* be older and *may* be applicable to the plants under consideration? Is it not evident that something other than a clear indication of the plants is sought? Is it the cheap renown of differing from “an authority?”

WHILE LESQUEREUX and James's Manual is the best book on the mosses of North America, let us use the names therein, even though we see their faults. While Gray's Manual remains the best book on the flowering plants of its range let us use its names, and “therewith be content.” And so of every book. Accept the best till there is a better. Only when monographing a group has one a moral right to discard any name however bad.

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## CURRENT LITERATURE.

### Minor Notices.

PLANTÆ EUROPEÆ is the title of an important work by Dr. K. Richter, whose first volume has just appeared. It is intended to be a systematic enumeration, with synonymy, of the indigenous phanerogams of Europe. The first volume contains 378 pages, with a very complete index, and presents the Gymnosperms and Monocotyledons. In the matter of nomenclature the oldest specific name is adopted, in whatever genus it has appeared. The Gymnosperms show 8 genera and 40 species; while the Monocotyledons have an enumeration of 251 genera and 1799 species. The largest family is Gramineæ, with 751 species, followed by Liliaceæ (342 species), Cyperaceæ (287 species), Orchidaceæ (170 species), and Iridaceæ (105 species). The work is an